



Guiding Principles

Actions to be taken to implement the Goals and Objectives of this Plan should be judged against these Guiding Principles.

1. Water is a precious and finite natural resource, it is essential to all life and vital to ecological, economic and social well-being.
2. The disparate distribution of water resources among watersheds poses a challenge to equitable allocation and use.
3. Prudent water management requires a commitment to ecological integrity and biologic diversity to ensure a healthy environment; to a dynamic economy; and to social equity for present and future generations.
4. The most effective way to eliminate pollution is to prevent its occurrence.
5. Integrated management is crucial for sound results. When making water resource management decisions:
 - Link water quality and water quantity with the management of other resources
 - Recognize hydrological, ecological, social and institutional systems
 - Recognize the importance of watershed and aquifer boundaries
 - Avoid shifts in pollution from one medium to another and avoid creating a problem in a different location or environmental medium
 - Push the boundaries of technologic possibility while balancing economic constraints
6. Improved land management is essential for improving the condition of water resources.
 - Decision-making should be based on sound scientific principles and an understanding of the relationship between land and water resources
 - Effective integrated management requires coordinated planning and action by all levels of government including federal, regional, state, and local levels
 - Existing planning efforts can provide the foundation for improving land and water resources management
7. Individually and collectively, we are responsible for the stewardship of our water resources through their judicious use and management.
 - An informed public is vital to an improved environmental future
 - Public-private partnerships and enhanced cooperation are necessary for improved results
 - Successful decision frameworks are those flexible enough to encourage and adapt to innovations and new knowledge
8. Existing legal structures and laws provide the framework in which management decisions are made.
9. Decision-making should give due consideration to the policies and requirements in existing laws and the legal rights of persons and entities potentially affected by water management decisions.
10. Authority to make integrated management decisions shall be derived from existing law as applicable, and may entail modifying or enacting new laws.
11. Legal structures should be utilized that facilitate managing water resources within entire basins, watersheds, and aquifers, rather than on the basis of political jurisdictional boundaries, while continuing to respect the sovereignty of states and their political subdivisions.
12. In water resources management, preferable actions are those that are structured to accommodate and be consistent with:
 - Preservation and enhancement of ecological integrity
 - Sustainability
 - Feasibility
 - Resilience to natural variability